IN THE SPECIFICATION

Replace the "ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE" with the following paragraph:

A~~In one aspect, the present invention is directed to a~~ technique is presented ~~of and layout~~ for ~~reducing,~~ minimizing ~~and/or eliminating~~ crosstalk between adjacent differential signal pairs in communications systems ~~employing differential signaling~~. ~~In one embodiment, present invention is a~~A backplane embodiment~~for a communications system~~, wherein the backplane includes a plurality of differential signal line pairs, is presented~~including a first differential signal line pair having a first differential signal line and a second differential signal line~~. A first~~Each~~ differential signal line pair ~~provides a communications path for a differential signal pair including~~can include a first differential signal line and a second differential signal line ~~wherein the first and second signals are differential signals~~. The backplane can have~~, in this aspect of the present invention, a~~ the first differential signal line ~~is~~ connected between ~~the~~ first and second vias ~~to provide a communications path for the first signal of a first differential signal pair~~. The[A] second differential signal line can be[is] connected between [the] third and fourth vias ~~to provide a communications path for the second signal of the first differential signal pair~~. ~~Further, a~~A third signal line can be[is] connected between fifth and sixth vias~~to provide a communications path for a third signal~~. The first via can be[is] spatially ~~located or position~~ adjacent to the fifth via such that a signal on the third signal line is coupled to the first differential signal line and ~~wherein~~ the fourth via can be[is] spatially located adjacent to the sixth via such that a[the] signal on the third signal line is coupled to the second differential signal line. ~~The coupling between the first signal and the third signal may equal or substantially equal to the coupling between the second signal and third signal. In those situations where the amount or impact of crosstalk between an third signal is neither equal nor substantially equal, the technique and layout of the present invention may still reduce and/or minimize crosstalk on the differential signals; and as such, it is intended that such situations fall within the scope of the present invention.~~

Replace the paragraph, on page 2, lines 3-11, with the following paragraph:

For example, with reference to FIGURES 1 and [2A-C]2A, 2B, 2C, a conventional data communications system typically includes a layout or routing of differential signal pair 2 such that signal paths 4 and 4' are equal (and the shortest) lengths. Similarly, differential signal pair 6 may be transmitted on signal paths 8 and 8', which are also equal in length. As such, the layout of the signal paths is unlikely to introduce additional skew between the respective signal pairs 2 and 6. (See, for example, U.S. Patents 6,249,544 and 6,252,904). This is significant because the receiver employs the difference between the signals of the differential signal pairs, sampled at a particular time, in order to recover the transmitted information.

Replace the paragraph, on page 7, lines 4-9, with the following paragraph:

In the course of the detailed description to follow, reference will be made to the attached drawings. These drawings show different aspects of the present invention and, where appropriate, reference numerals illustrating like structures, components, materials and/or elements in different figures are labeled similarly but may not be described in detail in the different figures. It is understood that various combinations of the structures, components, materials and/or elements, other than those specifically shown, are contemplated and are within the scope of the present invention.

Replace the paragraph, on page 8, lines 1-2, with the following paragraph:

FIGURES 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E [4B-E] are three-dimensional views of the layout of differential signal pairs of FIGURE 4A, according to one embodiment of the present invention;

Replace the paragraph, on page 8, line 18, with the following paragraph:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Replace the paragraph, on page 9, lines 3-12, with the following paragraph:

With reference to FIGURES 3 and [4A-E]4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E, in one embodiment, differential signal pairs 10a and 10b are routed, for example, across a backplane, according to the present invention in order to reduce, minimize and/or eliminate crosstalk from adjacent differential signal pairs. In particular, in one embodiment of the present invention, a first differential signal of signal pair 10a is routed on signal line 12, which connects via 14 and via 16. Similarly, a second differential signal of signal pair 10a is routed on signal line 12', which connects via 18 and via 20. The differential signal pair 10b, which is spatially adjacent to differential signal pair 10a, includes a first differential signal routed on signal line 22 (between via 24 and via 26) and a second differential signal routed on signal line 22' (between via 28 and via 30).

Replace the paragraph, on page 9, lines 13-18, with the following paragraph:

In operation (with reference to FIGURES 3 and 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E), the signal on signal line 12 electrically couples to the signal on line 22 as a result of the close proximity of vias 14 and 24. The signal on signal line 12 also electrically couples to the signal on line 22' as a result of the close proximity of vias 16 and 30. Similarly, the signal on signal line 12' electrically couples to the signal on line 22' due to the close proximity of vias 18 and 28. The signal on signal line 12' also electrically couples to the signal on line 22 due to the proximity of vias 20 and 26.

Replace the paragraph, on page 13, lines 1-12, with the following paragraph:

With reference to FIGURE 6B, communication system 34 typically includes a plurality of transmitters and receivers. In this regard, communications system 34 includes a plurality of unidirectional transmitter and receiver pairs (transmitter 36a and receiver 38b coupled by 40a; and transmitter 36b and receiver 38a coupled by 40b). Transmitter 36a and receiver 38a may be incorporated into transceiver 42a (in the form of an integrated circuit). Similarly, transmitter 36b and receiver 38b are incorporated into transceiver 42b. From a system level perspective, there are a plurality of such transmitter/receiver pairs in simultaneous operation, for example, four, five, eight or ten transmitter/receiver pairs, communicating across communications channel 40 having a plurality of differential signal pairs (including, for example, differential signal pairs 10a and 10b). Thus, in operation, the transmitter and receiver pairs simultaneously transmit data, control and/or clock signals across communications channel 40.